

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please CANCEL claims 27, 28, 32, 33, 35 and 36 without prejudice to or disclaimer of the recited subject matter.

Please AMEND claims 26, 31 and 34, and ADD new claims 37 and 38 as follows. For the Examiner's convenience, all claims currently pending in this application have been reproduced below:

1-17. (Previously Cancelled)

18. (Previously Added) An illumination optical system for illuminating a surface, to be illuminated, with use of light from a light source, said illumination optical system comprising:

a diffractive optical element for forming a desired light intensity distribution upon a predetermined plane;

an angular distribution transforming unit for transforming an angular distribution of light incident or to be incident on said diffractive optical element into a desired distribution, said angular distribution transforming unit also being operable to change the desired distribution;

a multiple beam producing unit, wherein the predetermined plane is a light entrance surface of said multiple beam producing unit; and

a light projecting element for superposing light rays from said multiple beam producing unit one upon another on the surface to be illuminated.

19. (Previously Added) An illumination optical system according to Claim 18, further comprising a blocking member for blocking zero-th order diffraction light produced by said diffractive optical element.

20. (Previously Added) An illumination optical system according to Claim 18, further comprising a blocking member for blocking zero-th order diffraction light produced by said diffractive optical element, wherein said blocking member is disposed one of (i) at or adjacent to the light entrance surface of said multiple beam producing unit, (ii) at or adjacent to the light exit surface of said multiple beam producing unit, and (iii) at a position optically conjugate with the same.

21. (Previously Added) An illumination optical system according to Claim 18, wherein said diffractive optical element is disposed at a Fourier transform plane with respect to the light entrance surface of said multiple beam producing unit.

22. (Previously Added) An illumination optical system according to Claim 18, further comprising an optical element disposed between said diffractive optical element and said multiple beam producing unit, said optical element being movable along an optical axis direction.

23. (Previously Added) An illumination optical system according to Claim 18, further comprising an internal reflection member effective to make uniform the light intensity distribution of the light incident on the light entrance surface thereof, wherein the light exit surface of said internal reflection member is disposed at a position optically conjugate with the light entrance surface of said multiple beam producing unit.

24. (Previously Added) An illumination optical system according to Claim 18, wherein said diffractive optical element is demountably inserted into an optical path.

25. (Previously Added) An illumination optical system according to Claim 18, wherein said blocking member is demountably inserted into an optical path.

26. (Currently Amended) An illumination optical system for illuminating a surface, to be illuminated, with use of light from a light source, said illumination optical system comprising:

a diffractive optical element for forming a desired light intensity distribution upon a predetermined plane;

an angular distribution transforming unit for transforming an angular distribution of light incident or to be incident on said diffractive optical element into a desired distribution, said angular distribution transforming unit also being operable to change the desired distribution; and

an internal reflection member effective to make uniform the light intensity distribution of the light incident on the light entrance surface thereof, wherein the light entrance surface of said internal reflection member and the diffractive optical element are optically conjugate with each other, light from said diffractive optical element is incident on the light entrance surface of said internal reflection member, and the surface to be illuminated is illuminated with light from said internal reflection member.

27. (Cancelled)

28. (Cancelled)

29. (Previously Added) An exposure apparatus comprising:

an illumination optical system for illuminating a mask, to be illuminated, with use of light from a light source, said illumination optical system including (i) a diffractive optical element for forming a desired light intensity distribution upon a predetermined plane, (ii) an angular distribution transforming unit for transforming an angular distribution of light incident or to be incident on said diffractive optical element into a desired distribution, said angular distribution transforming unit also being operable to change the desired distribution, (iii) a multiple beam producing unit, wherein the predetermined plane is a light entrance surface of said multiple beam producing unit, and (iv) a light projecting element for superposing light rays from said multiple beam producing unit upon one another on the surface to be illuminated; and

a projection optical system for projecting a pattern of the mask, illuminated with light from said illumination optical system, onto a wafer.

30. (Previously Added) A device manufacturing method, comprising the steps of:

applying a photosensitive material onto a wafer;

illuminating a mask surface, to be illuminated, by use of light from an illumination optical system, said illumination optical system including (i) a diffractive optical element for forming a desired light intensity distribution upon a predetermined plane, (ii) an angular distribution transforming unit for transforming an angular distribution of light incident or to be incident on said diffractive optical element into a desired distribution, said angular distribution transforming unit also being operable to change the desired distribution, (iii) a multiple beam producing unit, wherein the predetermined plane is a light entrance surface of said multiple beam producing unit, and (iv) a light projecting element for superposing light rays from said multiple beam producing unit upon one another on the surface to be illuminated;

transferring, by use of a projection optical system, a pattern of the mask onto a wafer; and

developing the transferred pattern.

31. (Currently Amended) A projection exposure apparatus comprising:

an illumination optical system for illuminating a mask, to be illuminated, with use of light from a light source, said illumination optical system including (i) a diffractive optical

element for forming a desired light intensity distribution upon a predetermined plane, (ii) an angular distribution transforming unit for transforming an angular distribution of light incident or to be incident on said diffractive optical element into a desired distribution, said angular distribution transforming unit also being operable to change the desired distribution, and (iii) an internal reflection member effective to make uniform the light intensity distribution of the light incident on the light entrance surface thereof, wherein the light entrance surface of said internal reflection member and the diffractive optical element are optically conjugate with each other, light from said diffractive optical element is incident on the light entrance surface of said internal reflection member, and the surface to be illuminated is illuminated with light from said internal reflection member; and

a projection optical system for projecting a pattern of the mask illuminated with light from said illumination optical system, onto a wafer.

32. (Cancelled)

33. (Cancelled)

34. (Currently Amended) A device manufacturing method comprising the steps of:  
applying a photosensitive material onto a wafer;  
illuminating a mask surface, to be illuminated, by use of light from an illumination system, said illumination optical system including (i) a diffractive optical element

for forming a desired light intensity distribution upon a predetermined plane, (ii) an angular distribution transforming unit for transforming an angular distribution of light incident or to be incident on said diffractive optical element into a desired distribution, said angular distribution transforming unit also being operable to change the desired distribution, and (iii) an internal reflection member effective to make uniform the light intensity distribution of the light incident on the light entrance surface thereof, wherein the light entrance surface of said internal reflection member and the diffractive optical element are optically conjugate with each other, light from said diffractive optical element is incident on the light entrance surface of said internal reflection member, and the surface to be illuminated is illuminated with light from said internal reflection member;

transferring, by use of a projection optical system, a pattern of the mask onto a wafer; and

developing the transferred pattern.

35. (Cancelled)

36. (Cancelled)

37. (New) An illumination optical system according to Claim 18, wherein said angular distribution transforming unit includes an optical element movable along an optical axis

direction, wherein, with the movement of said optical element, the angular distribution of light incident on the diffractive optical element is changed.

38. (New) An illumination optical system according to Claim 18, wherein said angular distribution transforming unit includes a plurality of optical elements demountably inserted into an optical path, wherein, with the selection of an optical element among said plurality of optical elements, to be present on the optical path, the angular distribution of light incident on the diffractive optical element is changed.